



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

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**SB 79 - State Personnel - Education and Transportation - Grievance Procedures
Senate Finance Committee
February 2, 2023**

SUPPORT

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 79. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 79 adds state Higher Education and Department of Transportation workers to the list of public workers that have the right to file grievances over payroll issues. Workers deserve to be paid the correct amount and on time. Incorrect or late payments can be the difference between financial stability and missed mortgage or car payments. Workers should not be financially penalized for errors made by their employer. SB 79 grants the same rights to grieve over payroll issues for employees of these departments that are provided to thousands of state employees.

Unfortunately, the state departments often make payroll mistakes and workers are forced to take on debt in order to cover their living expenses while waiting weeks and months to be paid wages they earned. These payroll errors create compounding issues that ruin workers credit and lead to far greater problems.

Grievances are an essential part of enforcing collective bargaining agreements. When employers violate the contract, workers have a right to file a grievance within certain time limits that can resolve the issue. Grievances also aim to make workers whole, so that employers are not incentivized to ignore or violate contracts whenever they want. The damages allowed in the bill are an important part of forcing employers to take payroll issues seriously and resolve them as fast as possible.

We urge the committee to issue a favorable report to SB 79.